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## THE ART MUSEUM

By R. A. HOLLAND, DIRECTOR



THE world moves slowly. Man's development when considered in its relation to the billions of years that the human race has existed on earth seems almost a failure. Yet we know mankind has advanced. We live in an age of inventions and science. Our achievements in the various sciences are among the wonders of the world. But by what will we be judged in the centuries that are to come? By what do we measure the greatness of the nations of the world that have gone? It is not the science, nor the inventions, these change or become obsolete. They meet the immediate needs and

no more. The succeeding generations find new conditions to be met and new problems to solve. So it is to the arts that we must turn for a record of man's real progress. It has been said that "Art alone endures" and this is a truth. All that remains to tell the story of man's achievements in the centuries past and gone is his art—the remaining fragments of pottery, decoration, sculpture and architecture that have been uncovered in buried cities or taken from the tombs of kings.

Kings and generals, their countless thousands of heroic men, their glorious victories, all are forgotten. Their wealth and commerce has passed away, but their art endures and is familiar to the smallest school boy, to the laborer in the streets.

If this is true then why should art and the study of art be considered a luxury or a pastime, a pretty diversion for the rich? Is it not rather the most serious, the most important and most far reaching of all our endeavors? There is nothing that art does not touch and influence. Our homes, our parks and streets, the vehicles upon the street, our dress, the furnishings in our homes to the commonest utensil, even the machinery in our great mills and factories has some touch of art either in design, line or decoration.

We Americans are accustomed to estimate the worth of things by their values in trade. Even men are estimated according to their wealth. If this is the standard then by which we judge all things, what of art?

To-day the art treasures of the world bring the highest prices of all man's creations. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are paid for a piece of canvas, a small oriental vase will bring a fortune. We might go on and speak of values, of historic interest, and of the various relations of art to mankind, but the greatest of all is its power for culture and its contribution to the happiness of the individual.

The study and appreciation of art increases one's capacity for the enjoyment of nature, one's observations are keener, our ability to discern that which is good and to distinguish between that which is in good or bad taste, is developed. The study of drawing and color harmonies, of design and composition, develops the mental faculties as does mathematics and other academic branches of education. This fact is now generally recognized by our educators, and most public schools and colleges have their course in art. Art schools for the training of the professional artist are established in every large city and to-day thousands of young men and women are being sent forth to enrich the world by their creations of beauty.

The Art Museum then becomes an educational institution of the greatest importance. This fact is generally recognized in most of our large cities where Art Museums and associations are established. Most such institutions receive more or less aid from the city revenues. Their property is exempt from taxation, and one, our own City Art Museum, receives its entire income from a special tax. Thus recognition is made of the educational importance of Art Museums everywhere.

The activities of the various Art Museums scattered throughout the country depends somewhat upon the conditions existing in their own locality. In recent years the interest in art education has spread at a rapid rate. There is scarcely a town of any considerable size that hasn't an art association or society. Papers are read, exhibitions held and pictures bought. It is the natural thing for the leaders of such organizations to look to the Museums for guidance and assistance.

The progressive Art Museum has photographs, and lantern slides which are available, members of the staff supply lectures, small collections are sent out for special exhibitions, the Museum becomes a center from which radiates an art influence impossible to estimate. Many institutions have in recent years taken up the question of a closer relationship and systematic co-operation with the public schools. In some instances the Museum receives a stipulated sum from the school board for the privileges accorded the teachers and pupils for study in the art classes and Museum.

In most Museums there are maintained special courses of study for the various grades of school children and competent instructors and docents employed who have charge of the work.

The City Art Museum of St. Louis should keep abreast of this movement. In many things we have been pioneers. We are the first and only Municipal Art Museum in this country, and because of this fact as much as any other we should be closely allied with our public schools. We have encouraged the free use of our galleries and collections. We provide guides and docents. We have lent our pictures to the Public Library and many of our schools, but as yet we have no systematic, definite course of action. There is no organized co-operation between the Museum and the schools. There should be. There are a number of causes which contribute to this state of affairs. No Art Museum can possibly become a power for esthetic culture in a community without the closest relationship with that community. And this relationship is brought about and strengthened by the organization of our interested citizens into associations and societies, whose interest is centered in the Art Museum and its development. Through such organizations the Museum is enabled to keep in closer touch with the public at large. Too frequently the idea prevails that an institution, provided for in a limited way by public funds, is taken care of. No public fund within my knowledge has been adequate to the institution receiving such funds, for maintenance alone, to say nothing of the future development of that institution and in particular does this apply to an Art Museum. Every great Museum possesses works by the old Masters, treasures costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, numbering among its collections rare and beautiful objects, individual pieces of which cost small fortunes. To the Museum receiving only a small annual income from any source, these objects are impossible. It comes then to a question of co-operation and assistance on the part of our public spirited citizens and the art organizations.

We must develop. There is every reason to believe that St. Louis in the future will become one of America's most beautiful, most progressive and enterprising cities. Her institutions should and must keep pace with the advancement made in other lines. The Art Museum must expand, we must add to our art treasures, we must reach our children, supplementing the work done in the schools.

We have only made a beginning, we are but laying the corner stone, and as we build, let us build for all time. The late Director, Prof. H. C. Ives, was a man of great ideas, a dreamer, but one who worked intelligently to make his dreams an actuality. He dreamed of a greater St. Louis with miles of beautiful homes, stretching to the north, the south and the west; a city of beautiful streets and boulevards, with subways and other necessary transportation facilities; of a time when

Forest Park would be the center of the city. To-day we see the beginning of the realization of this dream.

He planned a great Museum, supported by a permanent fund, a public tax; a Museum of all the arts, a beautiful edifice extending around an open court of flowers, fountains and statuary; an architectural hall; an auditorium beautifully decorated; galleries of works of the world's Masters; an Art Museum, every department of which would be complete, a great institution in keeping with the dignity and importance of the city in which it is located, a great working center from which would emanate an art influence extending into every home and beyond our own city into the great territory surrounding us. Of all these things he dreamed and for these he planned and worked.

He would never have believed so much would be realized so soon. He was not permitted to see the fruits of his labors. Those who may remember the St. Louis of ten or fifteen years ago need no argument to convince them of the possibility and probability of realizing soon all the predictions and hopes of the most optimistic. No city in the Union has made and is making greater progress in the same length of time. A few years ago the Pageant would have been an utter impossibility. The voting of bonds for public improvements was always discouraged or defeated. Our streets and parks and playgrounds were neglected. To-day the citizens are aroused. Our streets are improved and extended. Our parks are beautified and new parkways proposed and all but consummated. We have our free bridge and other great public utilities are under way. St. Louis has been imbued with a new spirit, the spirit of progress. Dreams have come true, and the dreams of those who have lived and of those who live will be realized, how soon rests with us.



THE CITY

FROM THE MUSEUM DOOR